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**THE JOINT TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS
IN
CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS**

**A Monograph
by
Major Blair A. Ross, Jr
Infantry**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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ABSTRACT

THE JOINT TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS IN CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS by Major Blair A. Ross, Jr., USA, 52 pages.

This monograph examines the establishment and structure of Joint Task Force headquarters in modern contingency operations. The large scale, well prepared, and extensively rehearsed efforts designed to win a global conflict, and the fixed command and control structures formed to direct them, will no longer be effective in dealing with the emerging regional threats of the post-Cold War era. In the foreseeable future, specially tailored Joint Task Force headquarters will have to be established to execute contingency operations at the operational level, under a warfighting CINC's strategic oversight. A range of options is available for the provision of the required headquarters structure. The one selected will have a significant impact on the planning and execution of the operation. The monograph seeks to determine whether or not an optimum solution exists for the designation and establishment of an operational level Joint Task Force headquarters for a major contingency.

The monograph first examines the theoretical foundations of command and control functions to establish a baseline for analysis. It next reviews selected historical examples of crisis response operations, deriving some basic conclusions as to the headquarters capabilities and characteristics necessary for successfully planning and executing a contingency. It then examines current doctrine and practice for the provision of the required command and control structure, analyzes the alternatives, and finally, makes recommendations as to the best means of providing the required joint headquarters.

The monograph concludes that the optimum solution is the designation of an existing service component three-star flag headquarters (Army Corps, Navy Fleet, Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, or USAF numbered Air Force) as the foundation for the JTF command structure, enhanced by a JCS controlled and resourced augmentation element providing necessary joint and interagency capabilities. Brief recommendations for the structure of the augmentation element are provided.

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INTRODUCTION

The United States prepared itself for a global war with the Soviet Union for the past forty years. Our military forces, including our extensive worldwide command and control structures, were built to address the global war requirements of opposing eastern and western alliances. Now that the threat from this quarter has declined, our National Military Strategy has changed to one oriented on regional versus global conflict. The capability to respond to crisis, in support of a minimal forward presence, has become the foundation of our strategic concept. Additionally, pressures are increasing for an expanded role for military forces in domestic and international operations short of war.

The implications for the U.S. armed forces are significant. Within the framework of the newly evolved military strategy, the ability to successfully execute joint, combined, and interagency contingency operations will become the principal measure of military effectiveness. The large scale, well prepared, and extensively rehearsed efforts designed to win a global conflict, as well as the command and control structures designed to direct them, will no longer be fully effective in dealing with the emerging regional threats. Further, future aggressors are unlikely to repeat Saddam Hussein's error of permitting us the time necessary to create a coalition of allies, build up an overwhelming theater force, and resolve joint and combined operational issues before we take action. They will respond rapidly, before a preponderance of forces can be brought to bear. With regard to domestic and international operations short of war, media and political pressures

for a timely response to events such as natural disasters, civil unrest, and similar situations will drive the hasty execution of any required military assistance.

As a consequence, we must have an ability to rapidly and effectively employ the contingency response elements of our armed forces to react to, contain, and resolve these situations. The requirement now is for flexible organizations that can quickly assume control of theater forward presence elements and assets deployed from the continental United States in accordance with mission requirements. Without such a command structure, our broad range of existing military crisis response capability cannot be effectively employed. This structure must be affordable within the constrained and competitive resource environment of a reduced military force.

JCS Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces, establishes the central aims for joint command organization: the provision of unity of effort, centralized direction, decentralized execution, common doctrine, and interoperability. The strategic objectives and the missions to be accomplished are the fundamental considerations in the establishment of a command organization.¹ These themes will appear frequently in the course of this study.

The great complexity of theater-wide requirements and the necessity for decentralized execution of joint operations will normally preclude a theater Commander-in-Chief (CINC) or, in the domestic case, a CONUS Major Command (MACOM) commander from directly controlling a contingency response. The recent U.S. Central Command experience in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM will be repeated only in the rarest of circumstances. Normally, a Joint Task Force (JTF) headquarters will have to be established to

execute contingency operations under a warfighting CINC or MACOM commander's oversight.

Several options are available for the provision of the required headquarters structure. Permanent regional or functional JTFs can be established, manned, and equipped to deal with area contingencies. Alternatively, existing service component headquarters can be augmented as required and employed as JTFs to control operations. Or, a unified or major command headquarters can dispatch an element of its own organization to function as the controlling agency.

This paper will briefly examine the theoretical foundations underlying the execution of headquarters responsibilities; review selected historical examples of crisis response operations, deriving some basic conclusions as to the headquarters capabilities and characteristics necessary for successfully planning and executing a contingency; examine current doctrine and practice for the provision of the required command and control structure; analyze the alternatives; and finally, recommend actions to address the joint contingency command and control requirement. As will be seen, a good case can be made that the designation of a service component headquarters, provided with a full joint or interagency capability by a CONUS-based staff augmentation element, presents the most operationally effective and resource efficient means for meeting this critical need.

II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In examining the capabilities, structure, and functional requirements of a JTF headquarters, it will be beneficial to understand some of the theoretical

constructs upon which concepts of organizational command and control are based. In an operational environment influenced by politically sensitive objectives, considerations of service and agency representation, and intensive media and public focus, it is possible to loose sight of what a task force headquarters must fundamentally be able to accomplish in the first place.

In theoretical terms, warfare can be divided into a physical domain, concerning such objective considerations as terrain, weapons, technology, and time, and a moral domain encompassing such psychological factors as emotion, uncertainty, and motivation. These two domains are conceptually linked by a third dimension, a *cybernetic* domain of warfare. This term is derived from the latin word *kybernetes*, meaning 'helmsman'.² In this case, it relates to the direction and guidance of an integral body, and is specifically concerned with the factors of organization, command, control, communications, and information.³

This cybernetic domain of war, embracing the roles of the commander and his staff, has been the subject of considerable theoretical examination. Clausewitz describes the critical role of the commander in harnessing the physical and psychological forces of his army through his determination and drive, overcoming the inherent friction in war by the force of his will.⁴ S.L.A. Marshall highlights command and control as the means of projecting leadership to the unit in battle, bringing order and unity to the chaos and isolation experienced by soldiers under the stress of combat.⁵ Martin Van Creveld emphasizes two basic functions, providing motivation at the point of action, and coordination of all elements behind the front line.⁶ He emphasizes that the command system must match the task at hand, and divides the concept of command and control into the areas of organization, procedure, and technical means.⁷ As German World War II division

commander Lothar Rendulic describes it, warfare confronts the commander with significant uncertainties, despite which decisions must be made. He characterizes the decision making process as a "creative act", shaped as much by intuition and perception as by the cold calculation of objective factors.⁸ By implication, decisions appropriate to the mission require a commander with such intuitive qualities, supported by a system which both provides the information he needs to arrive at a decision and enables the execution of decided actions.

Doctrinally, the U.S. Army characterizes an effective command and control system as one which provides leadership, delegates authority, and facilitates the freedom to operate.⁹ FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, defines leadership as the process of influencing others to accomplish the unit mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation. It describes both "direct" leadership, through personal example, command presence, and face-to-face interaction; and "indirect" leadership through other means of control, such as staff structure, established procedures, or orders and directives.¹⁰

In a synthesis of these theoretical constructs, command provides *purpose, direction, and motivation* to an organization. Its critical functions are *decision* and *leadership*. Control is the commander's means of *implementing his decisions, minimizing deviation* from the specified aim, and of *overcoming the friction* which impedes and distorts the organizational efforts to attain its objectives. Communications provides for the *flow of information* necessary to the command and control functions, and organization provides the *structural and procedural framework* within which these functions take place. To be effective, regardless of other externally imposed considerations, a Joint Task Force headquarters must address these fundamental aspects of the cybernetic domain of warfare.

III

HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

Several cases occurring since the conclusion of the Vietnam conflict provide illustrative examples of the command and control of contingency operations. Those briefly considered here will include the recovery of the S.S. Mayaguez and her crew; Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada; the strikes on Libya during Operation EL DORADO CANYON; Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama; the first three weeks of Operation DESERT SHIELD in Saudi Arabia; and the military response to Hurricane ANDREW in Florida.

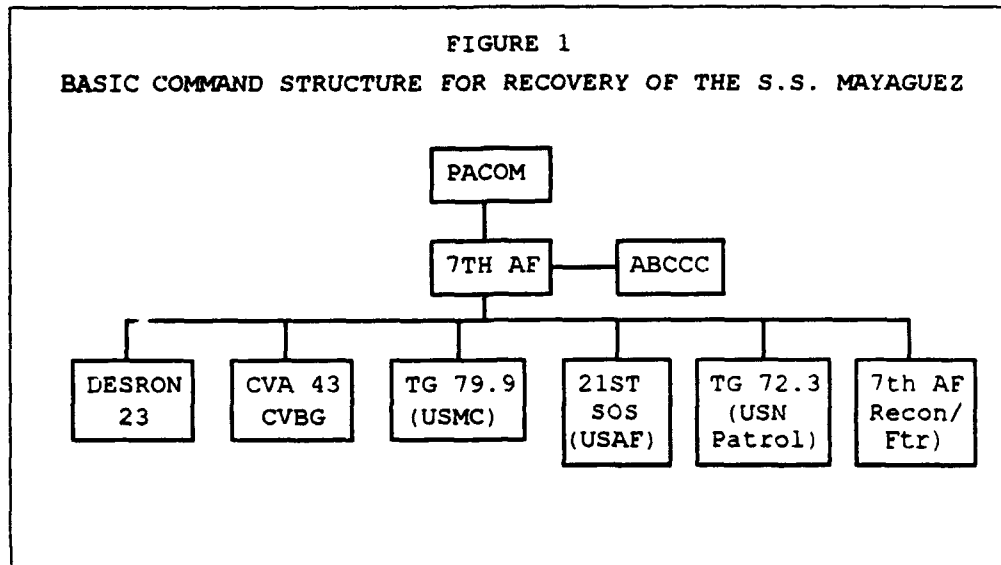
The focus in this section is not on a detailed examination of every aspect of these operations. It consists of a review of the command and control structures employed to direct them, and the impacts, positive and negative, that the various structures produced. Cases presenting a variety of operational circumstances have been selected: extended versus limited preparatory periods; complex, multi-service versus predominantly single-service operations; short duration missions versus long term operational requirements; combat versus non-combat operations. The intent is to include a reasonably broad range of experiences in the formulation of conclusions, although it clearly does not constitute a comprehensive review of every significant crisis response undertaken in the last twenty years.

The Recovery of the S.S. Mayaguez

On 12 May 1975 Khmer Rouge forces seized the S.S. Mayaguez, a U.S. flag container ship enroute from Hong Kong to Thailand in international waters. Intermittent radio reports from the vessel alerted U.S. authorities, and within hours the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) had initiated aerial search operations to locate the ship.¹¹ These were the first of a series of actions which ultimately concluded with the recovery of the vessel and her crew two days later. The final NCA directives to USCINCPAC, ADM Noel Gaylor, were to rescue the crew of the Mayaguez (assumed to be on nearby Koh Tang island), recover the vessel, and prevent Khmer Rouge reinforcement of Koh Tang in the process. H-Hour was established by the NCA as first light on 15 May, two days from the issuance of the directive. ADM Gaylor designated the commander of the U.S. 7th Air Force (7th AF), LTG John J. Burns, as the operational commander. This headquarters had overseen the recent evacuations of Saigon and Phnom Penh. ADM Gaylor also directed an array of other USPACOM forces in the western Pacific area to support the operation.¹²

Operating under pressing time constraints, forces consisting of U.S. Marine Corps assault troops airlifted from the Philippines and Okinawa, Air Force special operations and rescue helicopters, and Navy surface ships were hastily assembled at U Tapao, Thailand and in the operational area at sea. Strong air reconnaissance and strike support was provided by the 7th Air Force, Navy patrol assets in Thailand, and the USS Coral Sea aircraft carrier battle group. The Marines would be transported in the Air Force helicopters for the mission, as no naval amphibious assault assets would be available before 16 May, the day after the NCA specified H-Hour. The operation would be directed from the 7th AF

headquarters at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, with on-scene relay provided by an EC-130 Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC). This arrangement had worked reasonably well during the Saigon and Phnom Penh evacuations.¹³ The command structure as it eventually evolved is shown at Figure 1.



Source: Bolger, Daniel P. Americans at War, 1975-1986, An Era of Violent Peace (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988), 45

Time constraints, lack of adequate intelligence, and the ad hoc nature of the command arrangements imposed severe difficulties on the operation from the start. The assault force commander was dispatched from the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) headquarters on Okinawa, arriving late in the planning process. He was to be responsible for controlling the simultaneous ship recovery and Koh Tang rescue missions. He and his subordinate commanders were able to conduct only a brief overflight of Koh Tang, supplemented by sketchy aerial photography and spot reports. Lack of sufficient helicopter lift precluded

inserting the assault force commander's headquarters with the assaulting Marines, and he had no liaison officers either on the ABCCC or at 7th AF headquarters.¹⁴

The operation was executed as directed on 15 May. The recovery of the Mayaguez itself went well. The ship was unoccupied; the crew, after having been taken briefly to the Cambodian mainland, was placed aboard a Thai fishing boat and released by the Khmer Rouge on the morning of the 15th, possibly in response to the aggressive U.S. actions being undertaken to recover them.¹⁵ The assault on Koh Tang, however, was an entirely different matter. With fire support greatly limited by the assumed presence of the crew on the small island, and little intelligence available with regard to the true strength and disposition of the enemy, the operation was executed under crippling disadvantages. The air assault was heavily resisted from the outset, and the Marines were for the most part contained in their exposed landing zones. The withdrawal, executed towards the end of the day after the crew had been recovered at sea, was conducted under conditions as harrowing as the initial assault.¹⁶

Many of the problems that plagued this mission are inherent in short-notice operations conducted under the tremendous pressures generated by the necessity to promptly recover U.S. detainees or hostages while the opportunity still exists. In this case, however, additional problems were posed by the command and control structure employed for the mission. Though intelligence was limited, that information which was known was not expeditiously made available to the operational units, particularly the Marines. Additional information on Khmer Rouge strength, the fact of the safe recovery of the crew, and the timing of the withdrawal operation were all learned by the Marine commander on Koh Tang only incidentally, through Air Force pilots and Forward Air Controllers.¹⁷ The lack

of assault force representation at the headquarters and on the ABCCC certainly contributed to this. Further, the complexity and difficulties of a combat air assault into defended landing zones was not fully appreciated by the 7th Air Force commander or his staff.¹⁸ Though fully capable of planning, coordinating, and overseeing the extensive air operations conducted in support of the mission, they were poorly prepared for the most critical aspect -- the recovery of the crew itself. There is little reason to believe that, had they in fact been on Koh Tang island as anticipated, the assault as executed could have successfully recovered any or all of them. Delaying the operation until the more robust combat forces of the amphibious assault group were available the following day may have significantly altered the outcome of the attack. A commander and staff more fully versed in this type of operation, or the presence of a senior assault force representative during the preparatory stages of the operation, might have given greater emphasis to these concerns.

Operation URGENT FURY

In 1983, the situation on the island nation of Grenada became increasingly threatening to the stability of the Caribbean region. By mid-October, it had deteriorated to the point where the NCA was seriously concerned for both the regional implications of an entrenched Cuban and Soviet presence in Grenada as well as the safety of several hundred U.S. nationals, mostly medical students, then resident on the island.

On Thursday, 20 October, the JCS gave a warning order to the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command (USLANTCOM), ADM Wesley MacDonald, to be prepared to conduct military operations to evacuate

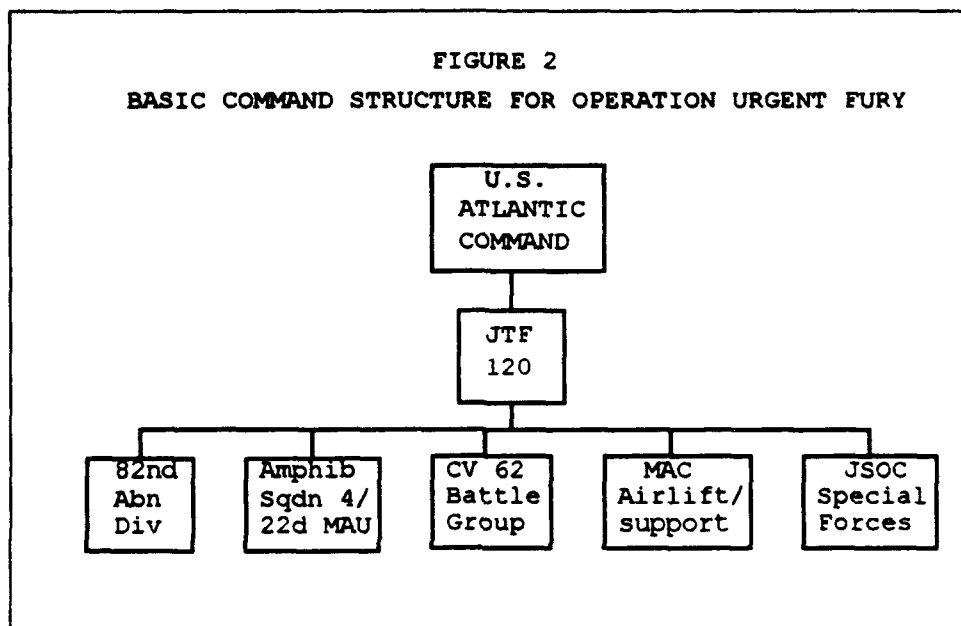
U.S. noncombatants from Grenada. This guidance expanded over the next three days to include the neutralization of Grenadian and Cuban armed forces, stabilization of the situation on the island, and extended peacekeeping operations. The JCS execute order was given on 22 October, establishing H-Hour early on the 25th.¹⁹

On 23 October, after rejecting the existing framework for contingency operations in the Caribbean islands (under U.S. Forces Caribbean, a LANTCOM two-star joint subunified command) as "not compatible" with the Grenada operational requirements, USCINCLANT designated the 2nd Fleet, under VADM Joseph Metcalf, as JTF 120, responsible for executing the mission.²⁰

The planning effort conducted after receipt of the JCS Warning Order was rushed and somewhat fragmented. The geographic dispersion of the headquarters involved and the late designation of the JTF headquarters seriously impeded operational coordination. Late inclusion of additional service component and intelligence assets to meet the expanding mission requirements further complicated the situation, and several parallel planning efforts took place. Forces involved eventually included the Navy's Amphibious Squadron Four with the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit (22d MAU) embarked, the 82nd Airborne Division from the Army, an increasing range of USAF airlift and tactical support aircraft under the control of the 21st Air Force, an aircraft carrier battle group built around the USS Independence, and special operations units under the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).²¹ The command structure that evolved is shown at Figure 2 (next page).

VADM Metcalf was not involved with the operational planning until his designation as JTF commander.²² Though he had sent 2nd Fleet staff

representatives to monitor the progress of planning, he lacked detailed familiarity with the matters discussed up to the point of JTF designation. Nor had he had the opportunity for any face-to-face contact with his subordinate commanders. This did not occur until the morning of 24 October, D-1, by which time the amphibious task force and MAU commanders were already enroute to the objective area.²³



Source: Daniel P. Bolger, *Americans at War, 1975-1986, An Era of Violent Peace* (Novato, C.A: Presidio, 1988), 23

The elements of the 2nd Fleet staff designated to form the JTF 120 headquarters were, as was reasonable to expect, unfamiliar with Army, Air Force, and special operations forces capabilities. This was particularly evident with regard to the airborne assault operations which figured prominently in the operational concept.²⁴ Orchestrating the complex preparations for airlift, air support, combat air patrol, reconnaissance, and tanker operations was far beyond the limited capabilities of the Air Force representative (a single colonel) provided

to the JTF 120 staff.²⁵ An Air Forces Forward (AFFOR) commander to coordinate the entire effort was not designated until D-Day.²⁶

Army forces, as well, were initially under-represented on the JTF 120 staff. The Major General finally provided was unfamiliar with the current operational capabilities and requirements of the airborne and special operations units involved, and he was not properly resourced for any continuous liaison capability.²⁷ Special operations force liaison was also very limited, which posed great difficulties when problems were encountered in executing the initial special operations assault missions.²⁸

Beyond this lack of joint operations experience on the JTF 120 staff and the inadequate joint service representation to make up for it, enormous difficulties were encountered by the JTF headquarters in communicating with its service component forces.²⁹ The lack of sufficient joint communications planning and resourcing precluded the ability to resolve service interoperability problems prior to execution. This problem affected all of the headquarters involved throughout the operation.³⁰

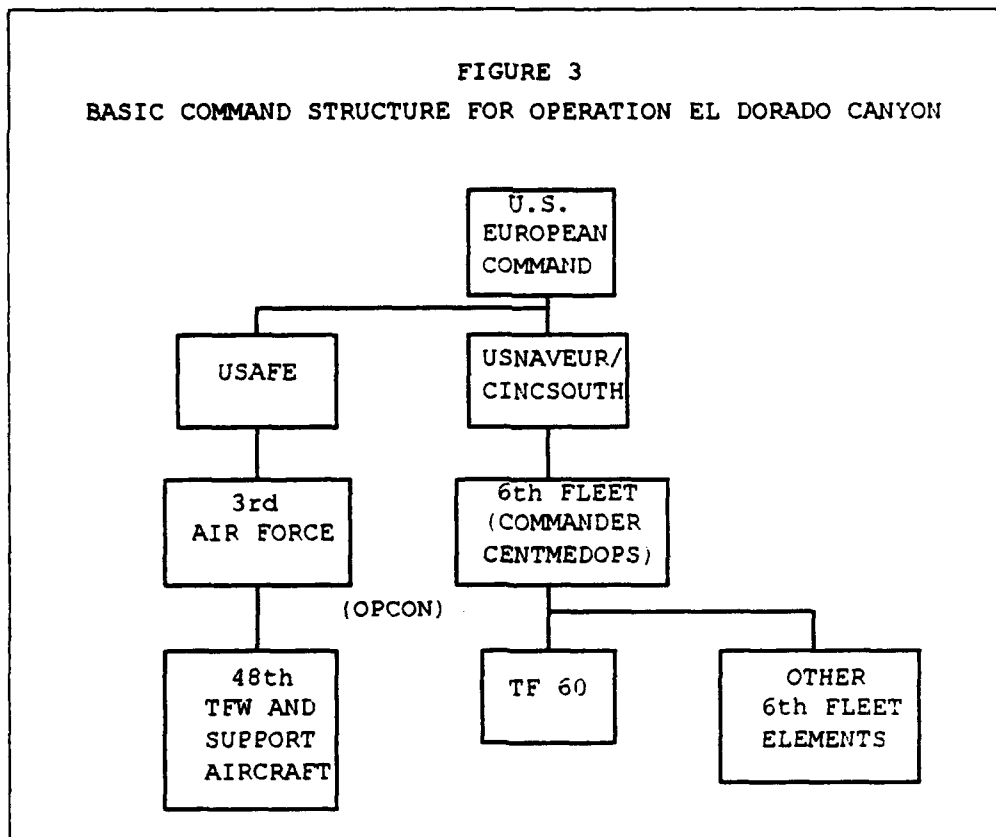
The assault on Grenada was executed as directed on 25 October. Though generally successful, operations were continuously plagued by delays, intermittent communications, sketchy intelligence, discrepancies in map grid systems, incomplete close air support coordination, and other joint interoperability problems that the JTF 120 staff was ill-equipped to resolve. Some of these problems might have been avoided had the joint headquarters previously designated for Caribbean operations been used (JTF 140, formed from USFORCARIB), executing existing plans for area contingencies with forces trained and prepared for such operations during the SOLID SHIELD series of joint exercises. Conversely, the complexity

of URGENT FURY might have easily overwhelmed this relatively small organization, operating without the "horsepower" or resources of a numbered fleet headquarters. More significantly, USFORCARIB did not enjoy the confidence of the CINC as being capable of executing the mission. With insufficient time to fully establish a new JTF headquarters and work out the inherent difficulties of complex joint operations, sizable risks were being assumed. USCINCLANT was willing to take them in order to satisfy his concerns that a capable commander and staff were directing the operation.

Operation EL DORADO CANYON

Several U.S. military actions in response to Libyan challenges to freedom of navigation in the Mediterranean Sea were conducted throughout the first half of the 1980's. They were normally executed by elements of the Navy's 6th Fleet, directing a battle force of two or three aircraft carrier battle groups. These activities led ultimately to Operation ATTAIN DOCUMENT III/PRARIE FIRE in March 1986, resulting in significant engagements with Libyan forces in, over, and around the Gulf of Sidra.³¹ The Libyan response to these operations included a pair of state-sponsored terrorist attacks against U.S. targets, TWA Flight 840 from Athens to Rome and La Belle Discotheque, a bar in Berlin frequented by U.S. soldiers. Aware of Libyan involvement through electronic intercepts, the NCA decided on 9 April 1986 to execute existing contingency plans for the conduct of a series of air strikes against Libya. They were intended to destroy known terrorist training and support facilities and dissuade Libyan leader Gadhafi from sponsoring further terroristic acts against U.S. citizens.³²

The U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) immediately began updating the plans. USCINCEUR, GEN Bernard Rogers, made the commander of the 6th Fleet, VADM Frank Kelso, responsible for the strikes, to be named Operation EL DORADO CANYON. Though no formal joint task force was designated, Kelso became Commander, Central Mediterranean Operations (COMCENTMEDOPS), effectively a JTF command. His aircraft carrier battle force, the preponderant element in the operation, was TF 60 under RADM Henry H. Mauz, consisting of two carrier battle groups and a surface action group. To bolster the night and all weather striking power of this element, Kelso was given operational control of USAF F111s and tankers from the 3rd Air Force in England.³³ The command structure is illustrated in Figure 3.



Source: Daniel Bolger, *Americans at War, 1976-1987, An Era of Violent Peace* (Novato, C.A. Presidio, 1988), 394.

Unlike the cases of the S.S. Mayaguez and URGENT FURY, no U.S. nationals were in imminent danger. Sufficient time existed for detailed planning and coordination of the operation, building upon a sizable base of data already available. The 6th Fleet and TF 60 staffs were experienced in orchestrating the type of operation called for as a result of the recent ATTAIN DOCUMENT activities, and the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing and 3rd Air Force staffs in Great Britain were fully qualified to conduct the preparations for the USAF portion of the strike. Liaison officers were exchanged between the involved headquarters to insure fully integrated plans. Despite some procedural difficulties, including the provision of slightly different intelligence to Navy and Air Force participants, sufficient and detailed information was provided to strike planners in a timely manner.³⁴ The air targets and airspace use were deconflicted prior to execution. Air Force planners were able to overcome the enormous difficulties posed by the refusal of France and Spain to grant overflight permission with the use of an elaborate aerial refueling operation.

VADM Kelso, given the latitude by CINCEUR and the NCA to execute the strikes once he felt he was fully prepared, waited until both Air Force and Navy units were ready. On 14 April, having received such affirmations, he ordered execution for 0200 on the 15th.

EL DORADO CANYON was executed substantially as planned. Few coordination or communications difficulties occurred, and problems with the delivery of ordnance were mostly a result of factors inherent in night bombing strikes demanding considerable precision and the Air Force's extremely long approach flight. The most significant difficulties experienced evolved from the

lack of full coordination of a search and rescue plan for downed USAF aircraft. The efforts conducted when an aircraft was lost were delayed by a lack of timely notification and provision of information to Navy assets involved in the search.³⁵

The requirements of Operation EL DORADO CANYON were considerably less complex than those of URGENT FURY or the Mayaguez recovery, and more time was available to coordinate and prepare the forces involved. Though technically complicated, it was a relatively straight forward strike operation of short duration, with qualified, experienced commanders and staffs in control. It provides an instructive example of an appropriate means of command and control for a limited objective contingency operation.

Operation JUST CAUSE

The political situation in Panama had deteriorated throughout the last half of the 1980's as Manuel Noriega consolidated his power within that nation. U.S. military planning and activity in response to his actions became increasingly aggressive, reflecting a frustrated administration's hardening policy line. The original command and control structure envisioned by the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) for directing any military contingency response was to utilize the existing JTF Panama, formed around the U.S. Army South (USARSO) headquarters with some joint augmentation. It would act in conjunction with a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) controlling special operations forces (SOF) activities, both co-equal under the CINC.

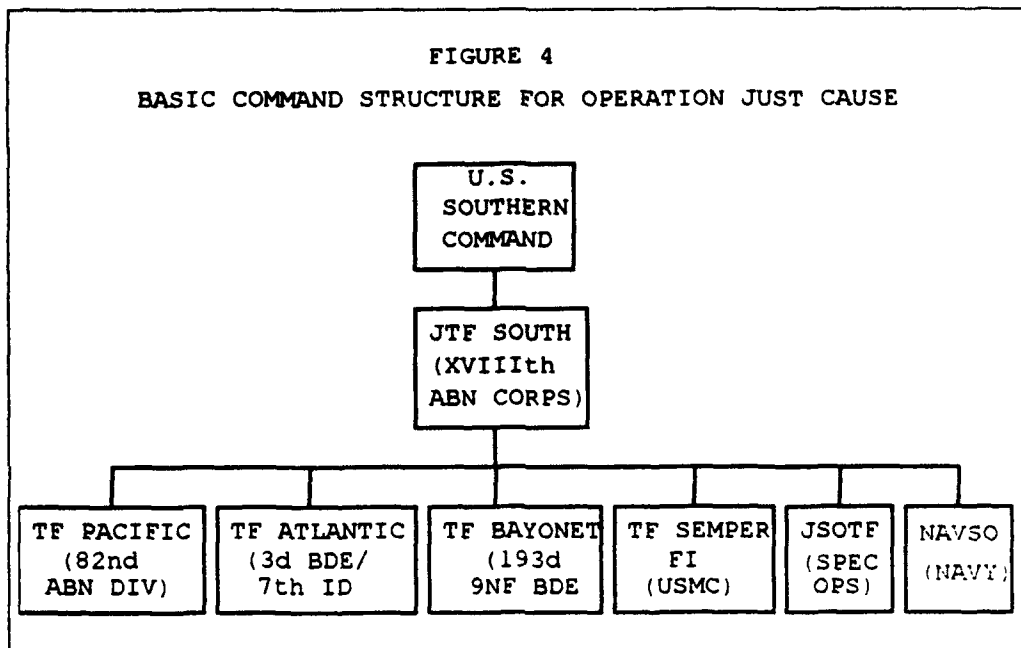
JTF Panama, under a junior Major General, had been formed in April 1988 to coordinate security operations, engage in contingency planning, and manage the routine aspects of dealing with the escalating tensions in Panama.³⁶ As it executed

its mission, JTF Panama experienced considerable friction with USSOUTHCOM's separate special operations headquarters, SOCSOUTH, over use and control of SOF assets. It also experienced difficulties with the local USMC element over Rules of Engagement and operational constraints.³⁷ The JCS view was that JTF Panama was adequate only for control of the existing forces in Panama, and that execution of the large-scale contingency plans then being refined would require a three-star corps commander with a fully manned, joint warfighting capability.³⁸

In August 1989 the current USCINCSO, apparently not fitting the NCA's mold for an aggressive proponent of U.S. interests in Panama, was replaced.³⁹ The new CINC, GEN Maxwell Thurman, requested the allocation of the Army's XVIIIth Airborne Corps, commanded by LTG Carl Stiner, as the foundation for a new JTF headquarters. This organization, JTF South, would control all ground and air actions in Panama in the event of an NCA decision to execute the major contingency plans. JTF Panama would continue the management of routine operations until plan execution, then be absorbed by JTF South. The JCS approved this request, and the corps became the centerpiece of the updated contingency plans.⁴⁰ The command structure is shown in Figure 4 (next page).

In the wake of an abortive coup on 3 October 1989, detailed plans involving simultaneous parachute, helicopter, and ground assaults, in conjunction with special operations activities oriented on endangered U.S. nationals and Noriega himself, were revised, coordinated and rehearsed. Key personnel and equipment were predeployed to Panama under the pretext of ongoing security augmentation activities. Intricate plans for management of the congested airspace over the Panama Canal area were worked out, and joint communications operating instructions were formulated and disseminated. Intelligence requirements were

coordinated by the agencies and units involved, making use of the relatively extensive body of information collected over the previous two years.



Source: U.S. Army, Combined Arms Center,
Center for Army Lessons Learned.
Operation JUST CAUSE Lessons Learned, Vol 1
(Ft Leavenworth, KS: October, 1990), 1-2

Operation JUST CAUSE was executed on 20 December 1989. A wide range of complications affected the operation, including an ice storm that delayed parachute assault aircraft at their departure airfields, unexpectedly tough defenses confronting some special operations forces, and unforeseen and prolonged resistance from neighborhood-based "Dignity Battalions". In general, however, reaction to these events was efficiently managed, adequate resources were available and sufficiently responsive to handle requirements, and missions were accomplished at reasonably small cost. A U.S. Army JTF headquarters, augmented as required by service components, conducted a predominantly ground-oriented campaign. Enough time had been available to fine-tune key aspects of the operational plan, resolve doctrinal and procedural differences, and

assure relatively thorough and effective direction of a highly decentralized operation.

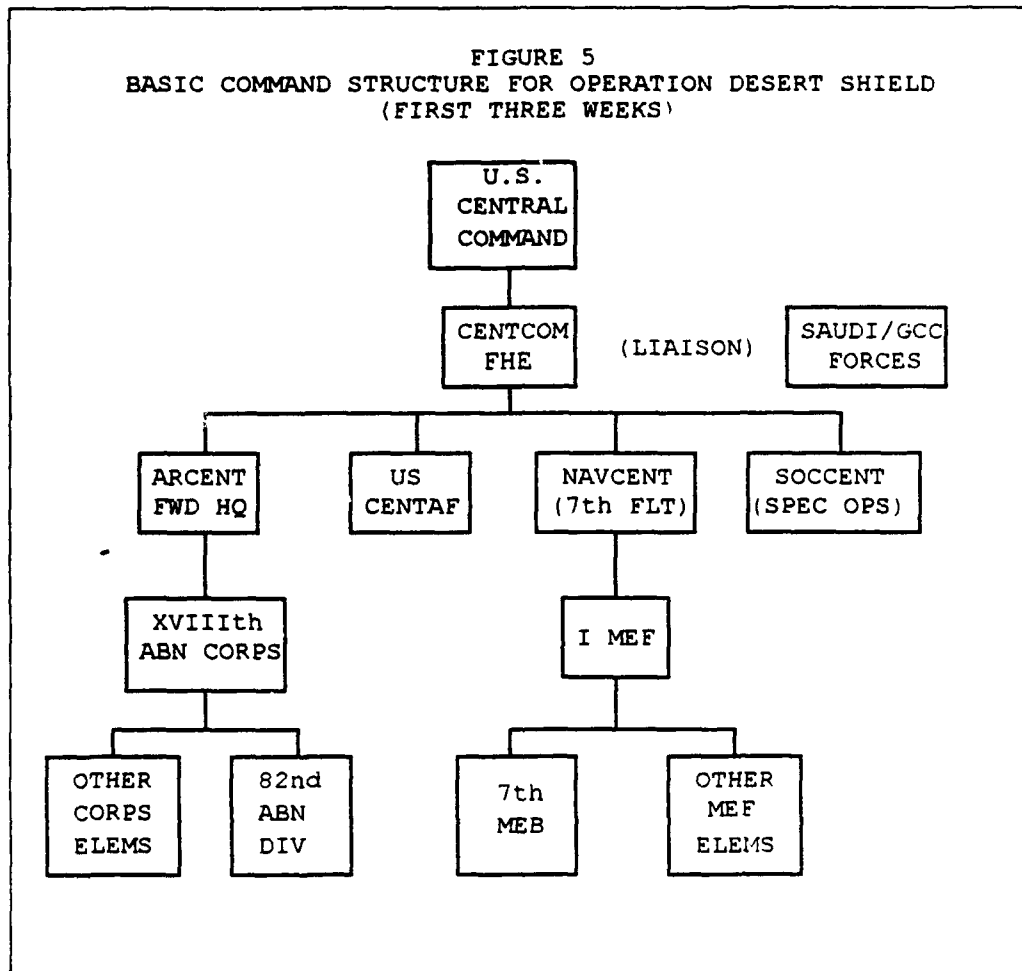
Operation DESERT SHIELD

On August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait in a bid to forcefully resolve long-standing friction between the two nations and further expand Iraq's influence into a de facto regional hegemony in the Arabian Gulf. The King of Saudi Arabia quickly acceded to U.S. desires to deploy substantial military forces to the region to stabilize the situation.

To execute this mission, the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) deployed a forward element of its headquarters to control the initial activities in the area. Feeling that the most critical task would be to get the massive deployment started, USCINCENT elected to remain at his headquarters at MacDill AFB, Florida.⁴¹ The Forward Headquarters Element (CENTCOM FHE) began arriving in Saudi Arabia on 9 August, concurrent with the arrival of the first ground and air combat forces under the XVIIIth Airborne Corps and 1st Tactical Fighter Wing. The FHE was established in Riyadh by about the middle of the month, under the direction of Air Force LTG Charles Horner, the commander of Air Forces, U.S. Central Command (COMUSCENTAF).⁴² CENTCOM FHE's tasks were focused on maintaining communications between the components and the CENTCOM rear, monitoring and coordinating maritime intercept operations, tracking the deployment of U.S. and friendly forces, and assisting in the coordination of "aircraft beddown".⁴³

Conspicuously absent from this list is any task related specifically to directing defensive operations in the event of a continued Iraqi advance, reflecting

the overwhelming concern of the headquarters with the management of the deployment of forces to the region. What operational scheme they were to follow once they arrived was in large measure left to the incoming units. The command structure used during this initial period is shown at Figure 5.



Source: Friedman, Norman, *Desert Victory, The War for Kuwait* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1991), 75.

This approach produced difficulties from the outset. Army and Marine forces arraying themselves to defend the eastern coastal corridor of Saudi Arabia had entirely separate lines of command back to the CENTCOM FHE, where there was minimal concern for integrating their activities. The CENTCOM operation order that was nominally providing instructions was based on a draft plan that

outlined the actions to be taken once the entire force was deployed, incorporating little detailed guidance for the incremental stages of force buildup. Marine and Army commanders arranged boundaries and coordinated operational concepts by mutual agreement. There was no guidance at all on dovetailing defensive schemes with those of any of the Saudi Arabian forces in the area. As force levels increased and defensive concepts changed, integration of efforts continued to be accomplished from the bottom up.⁴⁴ By the time USCINCENT and the bulk of his staff arrived, on 26 August, seven Army and Marine brigades were on the ground. They were still without a coherent defensive operational scheme from higher headquarters, much less a directed boundary between their forces. Communications between the elements that would be fighting the battle on adjacent terrain was through an informal exchange of liaison officers. Operational reports continued to go through separate chains, as did intelligence on the enemy situation.

In accordance with existing OPLANs, the Navy's component headquarters (NAVCENT) was the 7th Fleet, based in Hawaii. Unable to control complex maritime interception operations from there, the Navy-commanded Joint Task Force Middle East (which had executed operations in the Gulf for several years) was soon designated as NAVCENT. When the forces assigned rapidly exceeded the ability of this organization to manage them, the 7th Fleet headquarters was redesignated as NAVCENT, and remained so for the rest of the operation.⁴⁵ This shifting arrangement caused some confusion, particularly for the Marine forces it controlled.

Coordination of aerial combat and supporting activities was initially fragmented, as well. With the arrival of increasing numbers of Air Force, Marine,

and Army aircraft in the theater, finding adequate bases for them became a major task, consuming much of the attention of the CENTCOM FHE. A Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC) was not designated, nor a functioning joint tactical air control system established, until later in the DESERT SHIELD deployment.

USCENTCOM acknowledged the impact of these problems in its after action report with the comment, "component headquarters should not be burdened with the details of deploying forces when their primary task is to prepare arriving units for combat."⁴⁶ The absence of unity of effort and centralized direction for the tactical mission was evident in the first weeks of DESERT SHIELD. The lack of a true joint warfighting headquarters to address these key requirements added a considerable degree of operational risk to a situation characterized from the start by tremendous risk at the strategic level. Fortunately, Saddam Hussein elected not to exploit these vulnerabilities. Future opponents, wary of his example, may be far less willing to allow us the time to build a credible force and fully coordinate its joint and combined employment.

Hurricane ANDREW Relief

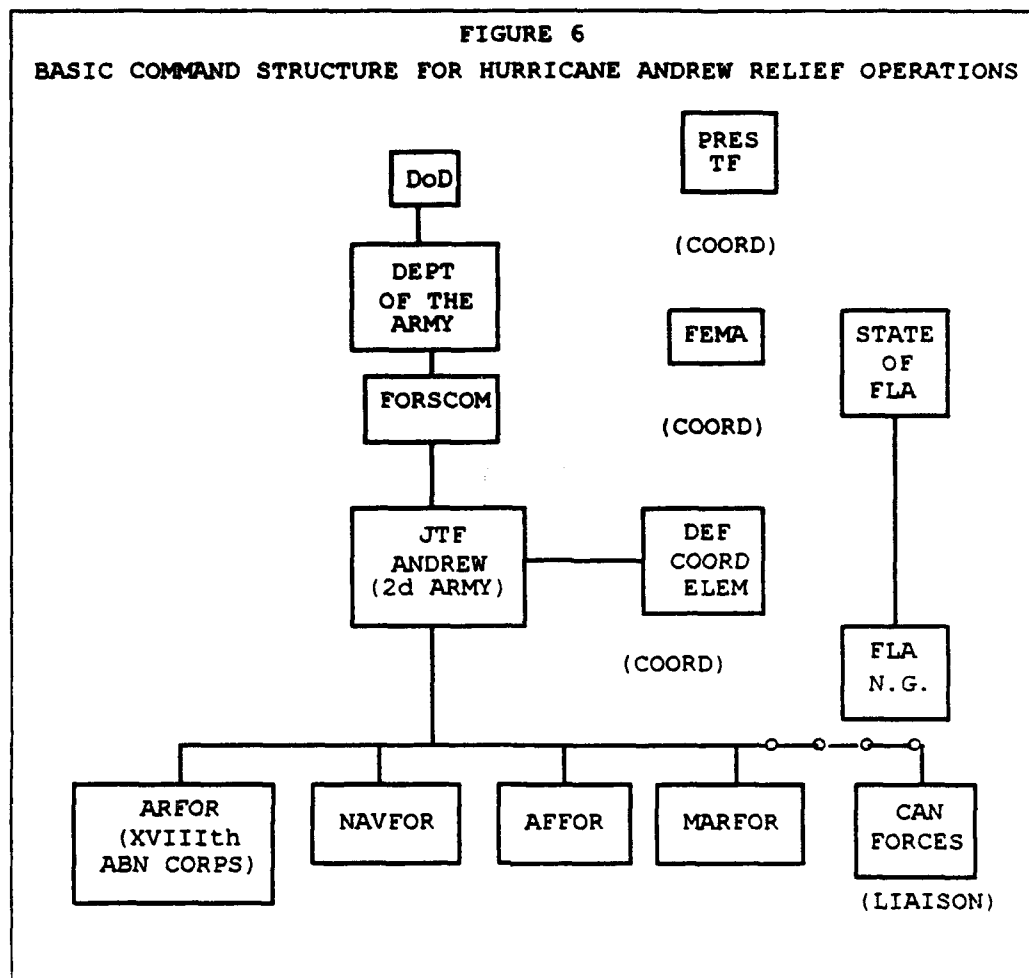
On 23 August 1993, Hurricane ANDREW was approaching the coast of Florida. Knowing this to be a significant hurricane, the United States Forces Command (USFORSCOM) tasked the headquarters of the 2nd Army, at Fort Gillem, Georgia, to appoint a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) to interface with the state government of Florida for any Department of Defense (DoD) assistance that might be required in the wake of the storm. The 2nd Army was the

Continental U.S. Army (CONUSA) with Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) responsibilities for that state.

Hurricane ANDREW made landfall at 0500 on 24 August, and it soon became evident that the magnitude of its destructive impact was immense. The President declared three Florida counties to be federal disaster areas the same day. On 25 August, USFORSCOM directed the 2nd Army commander, LTG Samuel Ebbesen, to deploy to Tallahassee to link up with state and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials for the coordination of military participation in the response to the disaster.⁴⁷

FEMA was designated as the federal government's "lead agency" for the response effort, in accordance with existing guidelines for such activities. Two days passed while various local, state, and federal officials assessed the scope of the problems and attempted to resolve differences of opinion over responsibilities, resources, and means of addressing the plight of an area stripped of its life support and governmental infrastructure. By the late afternoon of 27 August, the situation had deteriorated to the point that President Bush created a Presidential Task Force to take control of the federal response and gave the order for substantial DoD involvement in the relief effort. Later that day USFORSCOM directed 2nd Army to deploy a staff element to Miami to establish Joint Task Force ANDREW (JTFA) and begin coordination with Florida National Guard elements already on the scene.⁴⁸

JTFA was officially established on 29 August. It ultimately grew to a peak size of 23,808 active component and 5991 National Guard soldiers. It was the largest peacetime domestic deployment of DoD forces in United States history.⁴⁹ The eventual JTF structure is shown at Figure 6 (next page).



Source: U.S. Army, Forces Command, Joint Task Force Andrew
After Action Report (Ft McPherson, GA: 1992)

A number of problems plagued JTFA as it tried to orchestrate DoD assistance efforts. The DCO was not included in the initial assessments of the stricken area by state and federal officials, with the result that the full spectrum of DoD capabilities was not planned for. This caused considerable delay in mobilizing an appropriate DoD response.⁵⁰ Compounding this was poor initial coordination between DoD and FEMA on DoD missions and responsibilities, leading to both an initial understatement of DoD requirements, as well as some duplication of efforts which other federal agencies (i.e., the Red Cross) were

responsible for.⁵¹ JTFA and its subordinate units had to adjust their plans constantly to accommodate the increasing scope of the effort.

Tasks eventually accomplished by JTFA ranged from providing shelter in the form of tented camps to generating power for local municipal facilities to clearing corpses, animal carcasses, and debris from local communities.⁵² Few individuals involved had any idea that the relief effort would expand into what it eventually became.⁵³

The 2nd Army staff had to overcome an array of difficulties in establishing the JTF headquarters, further degrading from the smooth and efficient management of the DoD response. Adequate personnel augmentation was initially unavailable, and more valuable time was lost in sorting out manning, functions, and workspace issues as the headquarters began to absorb the augmentees eventually provided. The lack of a "definitive doctrine" for JTF operations also delayed the formation of an optimum command and control structure in the early stages of the relief effort.⁵⁴

The command and control scheme did reflect some positive aspects, however. 2nd Army utilized the headquarters of the 36th Engineer Group, substantially intact, as the JTF Engineer Staff Element. No time was lost in establishing working relationships, reporting, and other administrative procedures in this critical functional area.⁵⁵ The Army's XVIIIth Airborne Corps, designated as the Army forces component headquarters (ARFOR), also brought an intact, deployable command and control structure to the scene.

The strenuous efforts of all of the military personnel involved eventually made a significant contribution to the relief of the stricken area, to the degree that much post-crisis commentary, critical of FEMA's handling of the federal response,

recommended the permanent transfer of the domestic disaster relief responsibilities to the DoD. This issue aside, after action reports generally indicated that military units structured and equipped for warfighting can adapt quickly and effectively to such domestic requirements.⁵⁶ USFORSCOM's post-crisis analysis indicated that the use of CONUSAs as controlling headquarters was appropriate, given their existing routine interface with federal and state agencies, their conduct of MACA planning, and their regular participation in FEMA exercises.⁵⁷ The military response to Hurricane ANDREW, though adversely effected by initial delays and coordination difficulties, provides valuable experience upon which to base such operations in the future.

IV

CONCLUSIONS FROM HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

A wide range of lessons can be drawn from these historical cases. Presented here are selected conclusions derived from circumstances common to all or most of the cases examined. These conclusions will generally apply to future contingency response requirements.

To begin with, the problems seen in dealing with the essentially amphibious aspects of the Mayaguez operation by the 7th AF headquarters, as well as the difficulties plaguing the 2nd Fleet headquarters in handling the ground-oriented operation on Grenada, indicate that a high degree of expertise is necessary in managing unique mission characteristics and functioning in the operational environment dictated by the situation. Each crisis will generate diverse requirements, and the concept with which the theater CINC decides to address them will shape the size and composition of the force assigned to the mission. The

JTF commander and key members of his staff must have substantial practice in the employment of the preponderant or most critical elements of the force.

Contingency missions are normally so politically sensitive that there is little latitude for mission failure. Extensive JCS and NCA involvement can be expected, as well as close scrutiny by the media. They are "one shot" affairs which the NCA and regional CINC cannot afford to have mishandled due to a lack of capability on the part of the executing commander and staff. The impact of the DESERT ONE debacle on both America's prestige and the viability of the Carter administration remains vivid in the minds of national decisionmakers.

Secondly, this often service-specific operational expertise demanded by the central aspects of the mission must be complemented with appropriate representation from other services and agencies. The lack of suitable amphibious operational expertise on the 7th AF staff led to flawed decisions on the part of the commander with regard to the commitment of Marine elements on Koh Tang. Conversely, the adequate representation of unique Air Force requirements and perspectives on the 6th Fleet battle staff in EL DORADO CANYON demonstrates how the integration of joint capabilities can be effectively accomplished. The initial lack of federal and state agency representation on the 2nd Army staff in its role as JTF ANDREW highlights the potential difficulties in managing noncombatant operations. The headquarters must have a full appreciation of the capabilities, limitations, and operational procedures of each component element. Though not specifically illustrated in any of the historical cases examined, the recent trends towards operations within a coalition, United Nations, or alliance framework point to a potential requirement within the headquarters for significant combined operations capabilities, as well. The unity of effort, centralized

direction, common doctrine, and interoperability so critical to the success of joint, combined, and interagency operations can be attained only through the complete integration and coordination of all of the forces and assets involved. Without sufficiently experienced and senior representation in the staff, important capabilities may be ignored, potential problems be overlooked, and operational concerns not be addressed.

A third basic conclusion for significant contingency operations is that they will normally require at least a three-star on-scene commander, working closely with the theater CINC. The cases of USFORCARIB during URGENT FURY and JTF PANAMA during JUST CAUSE lend emphasis to this point. As previously mentioned, the sensitivity of this type of operation demands considerable talent to insure that the best effort is made to carry it off. The CINC will insist on an individual of sufficient judgment, political savvy, and seniority to direct its execution. Ideally, it will be someone with whom he has already established a working relationship. The upper levels of the chain of command will allow decentralized execution only if comfortable with the executing subordinates. Historical experience has demonstrated that both regional CINCs and the JCS are usually dissatisfied with plans that provide for less than a three-star joint commander for any significant requirement. This reality must be recognized and incorporated into any concept for contingency response.

A fourth conclusion is that, to be effective, a headquarters must be able to address the following four key functional requirements in any planning process, even on the shortest notice. The failure to incorporate any of these is a potential "war stopper", possibly leading to mission failure or unacceptably high casualties.

The first functional requirement is the capability to integrate the complete intelligence picture and disseminate it to all operational components. The commander's critical function of *decision* depends absolutely upon his possession of an accurate understanding of the situation and his opponent. The intelligence deficiencies of the Mayaguez rescue operation and URGENT FURY, as well as the substantial successes experienced during EL DORADO CANYON and JUST CAUSE, highlight this consideration. The headquarters must be able to fuse a broad range of national, theater, and service-specific capabilities to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information to the commander and his execution planners. It must then be able to disseminate pertinent intelligence to subordinate elements in a timely manner.

The second functional requirement is the capability to identify and address communications interoperability issues. In the modern age, a commander cannot perform the function of *leadership* without the ability to communicate electronically with his diffuse and distributed subordinates. The *control* which maintains the organizational focus on the established purpose and direction is totally reliant on the flow of information which efficient communications provides. The difficulties experienced by the 2nd Fleet command elements in controlling Army operations ashore during URGENT FURY illustrate the significance of this concern. The extensive communications coordination accomplished prior to the execution of JUST CAUSE indicates the potential benefits of properly addressing this issue, as well as the sizable effort required to do so.

The third functional requirement is the ability to fully coordinate the wide range of air assets available to support contingency operations. The conflicts and uncertainties experienced during URGENT FURY, as well as the relatively

effective coordination of complex air operations during EL DORADO CANYON and JUST CAUSE forcefully illustrate the importance of the requirement. The services operate an array of highly effective systems that can give tremendous capabilities to the joint force, from aerial defense and fire support to transportation, communications, and intelligence. The joint headquarters must be able to fully exploit these capabilities, synchronize their actions in consonance with the operational concept, and deconflict the timing, airspace, tactical procedures, communications nets, and the logistical support needed by each element.

The fourth functional requirement is the capability to fully integrate the actions of all ground forces engaged in the area. Army, Marine, and allied forces may all be involved in mission execution in close proximity to one another. The lack of coordination evident between Army and Marine elements on Grenada and the potentially disastrous situation existing during the first weeks of DESERT STORM reinforce the importance of this concern. In order to coordinate their activities and avoid friendly-fire casualties, the headquarters must be able to guide the planning and closely monitor the execution of each subordinate element with forces on the ground.

A fifth general conclusion is that the joint headquarters must be able to incorporate complex special operations activities within the framework of its overall mission concept. Although details of the Joint Special Operations Command's missions are classified, open sources address its involvement of in two of the historical cases examined.⁵⁸ In situations where the lives of U.S. nationals or important political figures are involved, the unique capabilities of special operations forces will be required to give the best chance for successful accomplishment of these sensitive aspects of the mission. The joint headquarters

must have a basic awareness of their capabilities and the impact that operational and support requirements will have on the overall plan.

A sixth basic conclusion is that the headquarters must have some preconceived Operations Plans (OPLANs), or at least Concept Plans (CONPLANs), upon which to establish a general framework for the response to the crisis situation. The problems associated with the lack of such plans in the Mayaguez and Hurricane ANDREW cases, the discarding of them in URGENT FURY, as well as the benefits of well developed and practiced concepts as seen in EL DORADO CANYON and JUST CAUSE, suitably illustrate this concern. As time is often a critical factor, the headquarters will not be able to "cold start" the operation and still be fully effective. Prior formulation of generic OPLANs and CONPLANs can address such critical concerns as intelligence on likely adversaries, availability of facilities for force staging or logistical support, and a host of other factors that will be important to any contingency operations. Such generalized plans are valuable in the conduct of joint exercises, key elements in crisis response preparedness. If a regional situation does deteriorate, generic plans can be updated and refined without the requirement to start from scratch. Detailed coordination based on an approved operational concept can be accomplished, and if time is available, actual rehearsals conducted, all prior to an NCA decision to execute. The joint headquarters must be able to function from a foundation established by a comprehensive prior planning effort.

A seventh and final conclusion derived from our historical experience is that the headquarters must be able to deploy rapidly to the area of operations without losing operational effectiveness. The significant degradation in capabilities experienced by the initially deployed CENTCOM FHE and JTF

ANDREW headquarters highlight this consideration. Only in the most exceptional circumstances will a headquarters be able to use its peacetime fixed facilities. It must be able to move a fully functional joint or interagency command and control element to the scene of the action and remain there as long as required.

V

CURRENT DOCTRINE AND APPLICATION

The ideal Joint Task Force headquarters will adequately apply the theoretical concepts underlying command and control requirements. It will also embrace all of the characteristics derived from an analysis of recent historical experiences. The challenge now is to determine the optimal method of achieving the required capabilities. Experience suggests three principle alternatives: to establish standing Joint Task Force headquarters on a regional, functional, or other basis; to build Joint Task Force headquarters from existing headquarters (service components, subunified commands, etc.) as and when required; or to utilize a portion of a theater unified command or CONUS major command headquarters as required. In considering these alternatives, it will be valuable to first review current joint doctrine and operational practice as it relates to the Joint Task Force issue.

As indicated in the preliminary stages of the JUST CAUSE case, the JCS will not hesitate to express its concern if a theater CINC's command and control concept appears to have weak points, and will readily offer whatever resources may be required to resolve that concern.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is reticent to specifically direct the method and procedures a CINC uses to control actions in his

area. The JCS understands the options available to the CINC, and though there have been suggestions to form a standing, fly-away contingency JTF headquarters package, this has not received JCS support.⁶⁰

What has been accomplished, however, is the refinement of doctrinal procedures for the command and control of joint operations. Joint Publication 5-00.2, Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures, dated September 1991, provides guidance for forming, staffing, deploying, employing, and redeploying a Joint Task Force for a short notice contingency operation.⁶¹ Portions of the document concerning the JTF headquarters itself deal with organizational requirements, functions, and liaison responsibilities, without explicitly specifying how the headquarters is to be established.⁶² After the experience of the Hurricane ANDREW relief effort, the 2nd Army indicated that the manual was too generic.⁶³ The JCS proponents state that the generalized nature of the doctrine is intentional, purposely leaving details to the prerogative of the CINC.⁶⁴ Of interest, then, is the approach of the unified commands to this issue. The methodology employed by USLANTCOM, USPACOM, the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), and the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) will be briefly examined here.

USLANTCOM has established a sort of "dual" JTF structure adapted to the particular demands of the theater.⁶⁵ Open ocean operations in the Atlantic, originally envisioned as in support of NATO and the Lehman-era Maritime Strategy, will fall under the direction of JTF 120, a predominantly Navy organization built around the 2nd Fleet headquarters. It will receive only minor augmentation from the other services, and in fact be a joint force "in name only".⁶⁶

For contingency operations on the littorals of the theater, in particular the Caribbean, a different headquarters will be formed. It carries the designation JTF 140, and will be based on any one of four service component headquarters, depending on the requirements of the mission: 2nd Fleet; XVIIIth Airborne Corps from USFORSCOM; the 12th Air Force from Air Combat Command; or IInd Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) from Fleet Marine Force Atlantic. The designated headquarters will be augmented with personnel from the LANTCOM headquarters staff, formed into a group designated Deployable Joint Task Force 140 Cadre, or DJTF140C. It is organized into two packages: an "A" element providing a baseline joint operational capability; and a "B" element which is dependent upon the requirements of the particular headquarters designated as JTF 140. Each package has twelve personnel. Individuals are identified in advance, and the system is regularly employed in joint exercises.

USPACOM employs a roughly similar concept.⁶⁷ Major theater service component commands, such as 7th Fleet or I MEF, will be designated as JTFs depending on mission requirements. The designated headquarters will be augmented by a Deployable Joint Task Force Augmentation Cell (DJTFAC), formed with individuals from the PACOM staff, service component headquarters based in Hawaii, and an existing joint intelligence cell. The DJTFAC structure is still evolving, and presently consists of 26 individuals. They have a deployable package of World Wide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) hardware, digital data interface equipment, and automatic data processing materials to support the JTF planning effort. PACOM conducts staff assistance visits and other training activities to prepare service component headquarters for the JTF role.

USEUCOM also focuses its JTF concept on its subordinate service components.⁶⁸ It normally tasks the commander with the majority of forces planned for the ensuing operation with provision of the headquarters. EUCOM then assists him in standing up the headquarters by providing appropriate functional specialists from their own command structure. Component command and EUCOM-sponsored joint training is routinely conducted, focusing on contingency planning, crisis action organization, JTF cadre preparation, headquarters functions, and other key operational areas. EUCOM additionally conducts seminars and training sessions to prepare component senior leaders to be JTF commanders.

USSOCOM has critical responsibilities in support of theater CINCs in the event of a crisis response requirement. If necessary due to unique mission requirements, provisions exist for it to become the supported command in another CINC's area of operations. Under such circumstances, USSOCOM is likely to employ the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) as its controlling headquarters. Few details on the specific mission and composition of JSOC can be given in an unclassified format. Information from open sources, however, is sufficient to illustrate some relevant points.⁶⁹ JSOC is a standing, versus an ad hoc headquarters. It works regularly with service-provided operational elements, and uses them in tailored teams as demanded by the specific situation. Though prepared to respond to a wide range of requirements, its combat power is limited when compared with conventional military organizations. While highly flexible within the framework of its specialized operational envelope, it cannot be expected to meet comprehensive, extended operational requirements. It is apparently expensive to maintain, as well. Its well-honed capability is attributed to highly

sophisticated weapons and equipment, constant and rigorous planning, training, and exercises, carefully selected personnel, and a large intelligence support infrastructure, all costly to sustain in a resource-constrained fiscal environment.⁷⁰ Though justified in the light of the demanding tasks JSOC must be prepared to undertake, it is questionable whether such expense can be justified in the case of less complex and time sensitive requirements.

VI

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current doctrine and practices reviewed above, coupled with both an understanding of the theoretical foundations of command and control and insights from the historical cases examined, can be used to analyze the alternatives for Joint Task Force headquarters formation. This in turn enables the illumination of some of the key advantages and disadvantages of each.

Standing contingency Joint Task Force headquarters, formed on a regional basis (i.e., one for LANTCOM, one for PACOM, etc.) could provide the advantage of having a permanently organized command and control element which can address many of the doctrinal and interoperability concerns that plague joint operations. They could exercise routinely with theater component and CONUS-provided forces, applying the provisions of OPLANs and CONPLANs provided by the unified command staff. The standing Joint Task Force headquarters would require a relatively fixed staff structure with permanently assigned personnel. This would allow it to formulate, refine, and exercise routine

procedures for operational planning and execution, alleviating many of the problems experienced by hastily formed, ad hoc joint headquarters organizations.

The standing Joint Task Force headquarters has some significant disadvantages, however. In the critical area of operational expertise, it is difficult to conceive of a single headquarters with the capabilities needed to plan, coordinate, and execute comprehensive naval, air, ground, and amphibious operations as capably as a service component headquarters specializing in its respective field. Providing an adequate depth of experience, necessary technical expertise, and full systems interoperability in all of these warfighting areas to such a single organization would be very resource intensive. Though this method is effectively employed by USSOCOM, it must be reiterated that the JSOC headquarters is focused on a limited, albeit complex, operational requirement, and is expensive to maintain, at that.

Beyond the capabilities and resourcing of the staff, and in this case arguably more critical, is the knowledge and experience of the JTF commander himself. It is unlikely that any officer, no matter how jointly trained and educated, can assimilate the technical knowledge and judgment of an officer who has spent the better part of his career wrestling with the challenges of a particular operational environment. Without this background, the commander becomes overly subject to the "expertise" of his subordinates; opinions become more forcefully expressed, concepts more hotly debated, and the varying judgments of junior personnel are more likely to become operative features of the plan. This entire process threatens the critical command function of *decision*, and can detract from the unity of effort vital to a complex joint operation. The CINC needs an expert to accomplish the task at hand; attempting to identify the individual

beforehand (i.e., the commander of a standing Joint Task Force) greatly limits the CINC's flexibility once a crisis occurs, and may ultimately prove unacceptable.

A second alternative, forming a Joint Task Force headquarters with assets taken from the existing unified or major command headquarters structure, has the advantage of giving wide flexibility to accommodate mission requirements. It permits the tailoring of headquarters composition to the operational tasks and forces allocated, and allows the CINC more latitude in the selection of the key individuals associated with directing the operation. It is the least costly alternative, as it would presumably have little overhead beyond the additional equipment needed to support a deployable headquarters.

This alternative has some significant disadvantages as well. On short-notice contingencies it would be difficult to build the baseline functional proficiency required in staff and headquarters operations, especially if the particular headquarters configuration had not been previously exercised. It would be risky to entrust a potentially complex, highly visible operation to a commander and staff members who, though individually qualified for their tasks, may not be completely familiar with each other's capabilities and who have only worked together on an infrequent basis, if at all. Additionally, assets taken "out of hide" would inevitably have an adverse impact on the unified or major command's ability to continue its regular functions.

A third alternative involves designating an existing headquarters, the choice depending on the situation, and augmenting it as necessary to provide a full joint, combined, or interagency operational capability. This alternative allows the CINC to select the commander he feels best qualified to handle the mission, supported by a cohesive staff familiar with the environment. The use of existing headquarters is

reasonably cost effective, as well, though the expense associated with providing adequate augmentation is a factor.

This augmentation requirement, critical to providing the designated headquarters with the joint, combined, or interagency characteristics and functional capabilities previously addressed, brings with it the most significant potential disadvantages. The headquarters would have to rapidly assimilate the augmentation element, integrating it into its planning and operational procedures on short notice, probably under pressing mission time constraints. This integration process could detract from the efficiency of the headquarters, particularly when compared to a permanent joint command and control structure. Further, the augmentation element must be resourced either by the regional CINC's headquarters or by a CONUS-based element. If from the regional command, it poses the disadvantage of bleeding resources from the ongoing theater mission; if from a CONUS command, response time is increased.

Comparison of the three alternatives indicates that this last alternative offers the theater CINC or MACOM commander the most viable means of providing command and control for a joint contingency operation. Allowing him to select the commander and staff he feels is best suited for the mission, then giving him the capability to augment that staff as required to bestow required additional capabilities, best addresses the theoretical concerns and the conclusions derived from the examination of past experiences. Though this alternative is applied in varying formats by LANTCOM and PACOM, it appears that current practice could be significantly improved upon.

The provision of the augmentation element from a CONUS-based organization, ideally one under JCS control, could more effectively and efficiently

address the requirement. It would insure full resourcing of all joint and interagency mission areas with both the most qualified personnel available and a comprehensive equipment and logistical support package, assets that may not be available locally to the theater command. A permanently structured element would provide the organizational stability lacking in the current provisional augmentation packages, at the same time removing the burden of resourcing the element out of the theater headquarters. This concept provides the basis for the following recommendations:

- > That contingency Joint Task Forces be built on an existing service component three-star headquarters (Navy numbered fleet, Army corps, USAF numbered air force, and USMC MEF), which designated being determined by the CINC based upon mission requirements and operational characteristics.

- > That a permanent joint and interagency staff augmentation element be formed in CONUS, for domestic or worldwide use in support of crisis response requirements. A prospective structure is as follows:

- >> A two-star, joint specialty officer functioning as chief staff officer, who would become a deputy to the designated JTF commander on deployment.

- >> A one-star service component representative for each service other than that providing the JTF headquarters. These officers would have a broad base of experience with their services' contingency response capabilities, ideally having served in such units previously.

- >> A senior representative from key federal agencies concerned with reaction to domestic crises. These would include the Department of Justice, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other necessary representation.

>> A small joint operations planning staff with full service and agency representation. It would be tailorable on deployment to fill in gaps on the designated JTF headquarters staff. Any redundant capability would not be dispatched.

>> A joint and interagency intelligence element capable of accessing and fusing the full range of national and service intelligence capabilities. It would be provided with a communications and data management package linking it with all available intelligence sources, as well as the capability to disseminate intelligence to assigned operational forces, regardless of service. It would include as part of its composition an analyst element from the J2 staff of whichever theater headquarters was involved, to be incorporated on deployment, in order to provide up-to-date regional background and expertise.

>> A joint airspace management element incorporating personnel with the expertise on service-specific capabilities necessary to effectively integrate air support for the contingency operation.

>> A joint communications element including full service representation in both communications planning and operational capability. It would give the designated JTF headquarters multiple, redundant means of communication with any service component elements assigned, and be capable of integrating with the communications suite of the designated headquarters.

>> A Special Operations Forces liaison element incorporating the capability of integrating any SOF activities into the JTF's operations, deconflicting air and ground actions, and coordinating operational and logistics support.

>> A rapid deployment capability for the augmentation package, to include prepacked equipment sets configured for airlift, precoordinated

movement plans, and established airlift requirements identified to the U.S. Transportation Command for priority response. The element would be based at or near an existing USAF base capable of supporting the deployment.

> That the contingency JTF structure be exercised regularly in order to insure that potential JTF headquarters are familiar with the augmentation element's capabilities and the challenges of controlling a variety of joint activities. Ideally, these events would be full scale joint exercises requiring the deployment and logistical support of an array of service forces. In the absence of such a capability due to funding constraints, computer supported Command Post Exercises, requiring at a minimum the deployment of the headquarters elements of participating units, could be substituted. The exercises would be based on existing theater OPLANs or CONPLANs, would replicate short-notice conditions to the greatest degree possible, and would be a critical tool in evaluating the feasibility and viability of theater concepts for contingency response.

VI

CONCLUSION

In the unpredictable environment of the post-cold war era, the United States will be faced with continual challenges to our security and vital interests. Our National Military Strategy recognizes this and appropriately frames a conceptual design for responding to such challenges as they arise. We must adapt our operational command and control structure accordingly, making preparedness to execute contingency operations the primary focus and defining characteristic of our joint force. This capability should not be a mere adjunct to the ability to

execute a global war plan against a vanished threat. The formulation of a functional system for the designation and establishment of Joint Task Force headquarters, made fully effective within a constrained resource environment, is a critical aspect of our readiness to execute the National Military Strategy. We cannot continue to rely on an inconsistently applied, ad hoc augmentation of service headquarters for this vital capability.

NOTES

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⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 104.

⁵ S.L.A. Marshall, Men Against Fire, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978), 87,92.

⁶ Van Creveld, Command in War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1985), 16.

⁷ Van Creveld, 10.

⁸ Lothar Rendulic, The Command Decision (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1947), 16.

⁹ U.S. Army, Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: 1986), 21.

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Chapter III

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